



Arlington Commission for Arts & Culture

Date: September 2, 2021

Time: 7:00-9:00pm

Location: Zoom

Minutes

Attending: Stewart Ikeda, Lidia Kenig-Scher, Stephanie Marlin-Curiel, Sarah Morgan-Wu, Andrea Nicolay, Christine Noah, Steve Poltorzycki, Cristin Canterbury Bagnall, Adria Arch, Beth Locke

Absent: Tom Davison, Steve Poltozycki, Tom Formicola,

Guests: Cecily Miller, Ali Carter, Nick Castellano (Grants Committee), Terry Holt, Jillian Harvey, Tomika Gotch

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

1) ROLL CALL AND RULES OF REMOTE MEETINGS CONDUCTED DURING COVID-19 (posted)

2) APPROVAL OF AUGUST MINUTES

- Minutes unanimously approved.

3) BUDGET/FUNDRAISING UPDATE (Cristin Canterbury Bagnall)

- We have met the goals we projected with the finance committee for the last two years.
- The budget was circulated and will be voted on in October. We go into this year with an \$18,000 grant from MAPC for the Remembrance of Climate Futures project so this year's budget is higher than last year. We have already raised significant grant funds because of MCC grant allocation and MAPC. Still, it is an aggressive fundraising goal as proposed.
- Summer Live Arts programming is covered by raised funds rolled over from the previous fiscal year.
- We now have a pool of 100 donors and plan to do a fundraising with Lisa Pedulla.

4) ARTIST HOUSING (Lidia Kenig-Scher)

- A vibrant community is not just artists, but artists working here in studios.
- Lidia is working on finding a building and dedicating it to artists
- The Maple Street and Lowell Street properties both had landlords that want one payer for the whole lease.
- Lidia put out a call for artists as to who is looking for a place to live and work. 30 people responded.
- Do we as a Commission want to commit to creating an artists space like Western Avenue Studios or Mud Flats Studio?
- Meanwhile, we would like to do a small pop-up holiday exhibition with 20 artists in empty storefronts

5) GRANTS COMMITTEE UPDATE (Nick Castellano)

- Nick raised the question of a conflict of interest giving ACAC funds, but Ali assured him that this conversation has been had dealt with through our Town Council and the MCC's Council and there is a memo that assures that there is no conflict of interest.
- Nick also raised the issue that raised funds need to sit in a State established fund. Although the grant funds appear in the budget for reporting purposes, ACAC has no contact with the funds or

the administration of the funds. Only the Grants Committee (formerly Arlington Cultural Council) does.

- The Grants Committee is beginning the new grants cycle. Priorities are similar and continuing to have a focus on DEIA. There will be a grants workshop on September 22. Accepting applications up until October 15.
- They are not doing a Grantee reception this year. There is a plan to do a big one next year.

6) **GUEST – JILLIAN HARVEY, Arlington DEIA Director**

- Jillian Harvey oversees and works with the Human Rights Commission, Rainbow Commission and Disability Commission and oversees the ADA compliance in the town. Jillian has been coordinating equity training and identifying the steps to creating an equity plan. She will also be working with the new DEI director for the school district.
- Stewart asked if there is an opportunity for Commission to benefit from the training that is being given to staff, mostly department heads. Jillian would like to map out a training for boards and commissions.
- The Commission is grateful to have the opportunity to work with Jillian on projects including our current artist-in-residence Chanel Thervil, a previous talk with poet Charles Coe, and our contribution to BHM banners
- The new DEI Director for the school is responsible for working with parents and students at the administrative level. Her role is not to be a teacher but a resource.
- **STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION:** Stewart presented and updated on the Commission's DEI goal: We've made a good deal of progress in being more intentional in our programming and our marketing and communications.
- Stephanie suggested we take a look at Forecast Public Arts Public art audit tool?
- What structural or behavioral changes are needed to increase our goal of inclusivity; I.e. should we revisit the How long we have lived in Arlington qualifying question.
- Jill will send us a set of guiding questions to help with everything we are doing as a Commission
- We have made some progress on identifying who we are not reaching, but it is a difficult process.
- We have worked on programming and communication, but the next hurdle is recruitment. How do we diversify our own ranks?
- Tomika requested an elevator pitch to the Japanese families that can be translated and handed out.
- Lidia suggests looking at the entities already in town such as the Japanese School, Spanish language schools and the diversity we already have in the Commission and start programming in those areas with partners.
- Cecily said we might think about celebrating more cross cultural art forms like food and recipes. In Somerville, focusing on food has led them to connect to all sorts of communities. Gardens might be another focus. Food and gardens are a great way to increase our visibility, and get people involved who might be intimidated by art with a capital A.
- Ali mentioned having an ethnic market walking tour in Arlington. Finding a way to tap into the diversity of the business community. In some places, they have established community garden plots for refugees. That is a great way to connect with people too. Maybe we should check with managers of community gardens.
- The creative placemaking project at Menotomy Manor will have raised garden beds. The Commission hopes to be involved in that; it could be a focus of a residency with an artist.
- Think about a movable feast open house ideas.
- Arlington should consider a cultural exchange with other communities too, such as the "getting on the redline" project Cecily brought up a few months ago.
- Cecily mentioned that she and Rachel Oliveri and Tom Starr from the Climate Resiliency project had a meeting with climate interns and activist Ron White, who asked if we have spoken to any indigenous people in Arlington as they are the original stewards of the environment in Arlington. We need to think creatively about who else has a stake in the issues we are confronting in our programs.
- Andrea Nicolay (Library Director) mentioned that the cookbook club was one of the most popular groups in Arlington.
- Stewart will announce another DEIA Committee meeting and invite all members from all subcommittees.

7) **NEW BUSINESS**

- The Commission needs to focus on publicizing Chairful.

- Open Space questionnaire is still open for responses.
- The ARPA funding public comment period is still open. How can we find out whether individual artists might fall under the category of small businesses and help the town reach artists. We can also help reach non-profits and creative businesses. Stephanie sentd a communication to the non-profit groups with info about the ARPA review memo. This is an advocacy moment. The non-profits have the opportunity to advocate and make a statement of cultural need.
- Ali reminded us that we are all obligated to do the ethics training every two years.

Meeting adjourned 9:04pm

Respectfully submitted by Stephanie Marlin-Curiel

Next meeting: October 7, 7pm